

“Bro Talk” and “Girlypop”: Terms of Address and Subgroup Identities Amongst Queer Women  
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The goal of this pilot study is to investigate the usage of and attitudes towards the terms of address, *dude*, *bro*, *man*, *sis*, *girl*, and *bitch* amongst queer female speakers. Terms of address are used in establishing solidarity, group membership and identity (Parkinson, 2020; Kiesling, 2004), and have been shown to carry gendered meanings (Kiesling, 2004). The co-construction of gender and sexuality has been studied in the speech of queer women, (Jones, 2012; McElhinny, 2014) along with the importance of gender in understanding the nuance of queer women's identity (Moonwomon, 1997). Sexuality appears to lack consideration in the existing literature on terms of address (Rendle-Short, 2009; Urichuk & Loureiro-Rodríguez, 2019). This pilot study starts to address this gap in research by looking at the usage and attitudes towards terms of address in queer female speakers and the connection between these terms and subgroup identities for these speakers.

This pilot study utilized synchronic and virtual focus groups with 22 queer-identified women from Winnipeg, Manitoba, and the surrounding area. Participants had an average age of 25 and most (n=16) identified as white or Caucasian. Focus groups were recorded, transcribed and coded inductively and deductively. First, I asked broader questions about queer language and the differences between masculine and feminine queer women's language. Following this, I asked groups about the usage and attitudes about each term of address, which had been selected based on my observations within the community, and the subgroup identities associated with each term.

Most participants defined queer language as inclusive and gender neutral while maintaining that there is a difference in the language of queer women according to their gender presentation. Participants viewed *dude* as gender neutral and widely used, while *man* was reported as not being used due to its association with cisgender men. *Sis* and *bitch* were reported as minimally used because of their associations with AAVE and derogatory language, respectively. However, *bro* and *girl* were described as connected to the performance of both gender and sexual identity simultaneously. *Bro* was viewed as emblematic of a “classic masc stereotype” (FG6AF) while *girl* was integral to a shared experience of queer girlhood. Subgroup identity categories appear to be critical in the selection of *bro* and *girl* and participants mention their experience of usage in the community as reflecting that. This poses an interesting contradiction considering the participants' discussion of the importance of inclusive, gender-neutral language in these communities.

This pilot study provides insight into the terms of address young queer women in Winnipeg are using. Findings demonstrate that terms of address are important for understanding subgroup identity performance amongst queer women. These findings also illustrate the

importance of queer speakers in the study of address terms to fully understand the social functions these words perform.

#### References

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